

Sexual Violence State Plan Advisory Board 2004 Report

A report on the progress of the implementation
of the Virginia Sexual Violence State Plan

June 2005

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The Sexual Violence State Plan Advisory Board was established in 2003 to bring together sexual violence stakeholders and develop a statewide plan for sexual violence prevention programming in Virginia. The board is made up of 21 members currently representing the following agencies:

- Virginia Department of Health
- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
- Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance
- Virginia Statewide Campus Task Force (against sexual assault)
- Virginia Department of Education
- Virginia Department of Correctional Education
- Virginia Department of Social Services
- Prevent Child Abuse Virginia
- Representatives from local sexual assault crisis centers

The main objective of the Board is to guide Virginia's implementation of the Virginia Sexual Violence State Plan developed in 2003. This State Plan was reviewed and is supported by all member agencies. The five goals of this State Plan are:

1. Sexual violence prevention and intervention services receive adequate funding and resources.
2. Data are used to improve sexual violence prevention and intervention.
3. Comprehensive sexual violence services are accessible in every Virginia community.
4. Effective and comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategies are implemented across Virginia.
5. Public policies are reformed to respond effectively to sexual violence through prevention and intervention.

The purpose of this report is to review the progress of the implementation of the State Plan during the 2003-2004 years. Because this report only reflects the work during that time, progress is only reflected for the 2-Year Objectives.

Goal 1: Sexual violence prevention and services receive adequate resources

Objective 1: Create a collaborative agreement between the appropriate statewide groups to outline the roles and responsibilities relative to the implementation of objectives in the VA Sexual Violence Prevention Plan.

Progress: Memorandum of Agreement has been reviewed and signed by all three statewide agencies: Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, and Virginians Aligned Against Sexual Assault (currently known as the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance).

Objective 2: Collaboratively fund state and regional planning efforts referred to this planning document.

Progress: Grant through the Department of Justice was applied for that requested funding for this purpose, however grant was not accepted.

Objective 3: Based upon a needs assessment, secure an increase in state funding support for sexual assault centers by at least 50% of the projected need.

Progress: There has not been a needs assessment conducted as of yet. Additionally, the projected goal of a 50% increase in funding may be unrealistic at this point. However, a new state domestic violence victim fund was created by the General Assembly in the spring of 2004, and started collections on July 1, 2004. The funds will be administered through DCJS. It is anticipated that some of these dollars will be spent to support sexual violence services.

Objective 4: Initiate state funding support for sexual violence prevention.

Progress: VDH and VSDVAA worked with Old Dominion University to complete a statewide study on sexual violence. The study reports a lack of adequate funding in a number of areas of sexual violence prevention and services, and will be used in upcoming sessions of the General Assembly to request further funding for sexual violence prevention.

Objective 5: Identify agencies other than sexual assault programs that could also be providing some sexual violence services.

Progress: List currently being compiled.

Objective 6: Secure a state coordinator for sexual violence and inter-personal violence services at the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV).

Progress: A representative from the Virginia Campus Coalition Against Sexual Assault met with representatives from SCHEV, however, at this time, SCHEV does not have the resources to support this type of endeavor. This will remain a goal for the Board, but members will be looking at other agencies to host the position.

Objective 7: Create an infrastructure that enables the Commonwealth of Virginia to apply for and receive relevant grants for sexual violence.

Progress: The State Plan Advisory Board became this infrastructure. VDH was recently awarded a 3-year ESCAPE (Enhancing State Capacity to Address Violence Prevention) grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a statewide plan to address child and adolescent violence, for which three Board members submitted letters of support. Additionally, DCJS and the Alliance will be looking into future funding opportunities from the Debbie Smith Act.

Objective 8: Secure sources of funding for data collection efforts, including data entry and technology for local and state VADa efforts.

Progress: A grant was applied for through the Department of Justice, however, was not awarded to do statewide data collection and coordination for campuses. We will look at reapplying in March 2005.

Objective 9: Educate sexual violence stakeholders about grant and funding opportunities.

Progress: VDH, DCJS and the Alliance have all been working more effectively at dispersing information on funding opportunities to stakeholders through the use of list serves, newsletters, trainings and workshops, and regional meetings for the local sexual assault centers and various other stakeholders. Though there is no statewide compilation of all the state funding sources, VDH and DCJS currently list their funding opportunities on their websites, and the new Alliance website will also feature a link for grant and funding opportunities.

Objective 10: Secure funding to the state sexual violence coalition to support making VAWA a permanent federal fund.

Progress: The Board has forwarded their concerns onto the public policy department at the Alliance.

Objective 11: Expand federal VOCA guidelines to cover sexual violence victims charged with crimes (such as sex workers and victims in prison).

Progress: Draft VOCA guidelines do not currently allow for the provision of services to these groups. VSDVAA may choose to address this issue with the Office on Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice.

Objective 12: Raise or eliminate the cap on federal VOCA funds

Progress: The VOCA cap is in flux from year to year. Although the cap is sometimes raised, additional earmarks to the funds result in level or decreased funds for sexual violence services. VSDVAA may choose to address this issue with the Office on Victims of Crime in the Department of Justice.

Goal 2: Data is used to improve sexual violence prevention and intervention

Objective 1: Consolidate all sexual violence data in a report and distribute to all stakeholders.

Progress: The 2003 Virginia State Sexual Violence Report (draft) has been completed. VSDVAA plans to print 250 of these reports to distribute to the sexual assault crisis centers. The report will also be available on the VDH, DCJS and VSDVAA websites. Additionally, this data was also included in the recent study entitled *Response to and Prevention of Sexual Assault in the Commonwealth of Virginia* commissioned by the 2004 General Assembly.

Objective 2: Identify data gaps and develop a plan to close gaps

Progress: Several data gaps were identified in the development of this report. This will be an item the Board will be working on in the coming year.

Objective 3: Develop a mechanism to gather data to identify Virginia's "best practices."

Progress: This item was discussed as a possible project with the Sociology Research Group at Virginia Commonwealth University. As part of the new Certificate Program in Sexual and Domestic Violence through the Sociology Department at VCU, there will be internships of 12 hours per week for students. Plans include determining if a student can begin to gather the Best Practices data in the Fall of 2005.

Goal 3: Comprehensive sexual assault services are accessible in every Virginia community

SUBGOAL 1: Sexual assault centers provide comprehensive services.

Progress: VSDVAA has taken this on as a project. The joint regional meetings to be held by the Alliance, VDH and DCJS will work to gather input from stakeholders on this item.

Objective 1: A task force comprised of sexual violence service professionals and sexual violence survivors will determine an ideal set of comprehensive services for sexual assault centers.

Progress: VSDVAA has taken this on as a project. The joint regional meetings to be held by the Alliance, VDH and DCJS will work to gather input from stakeholders on this item.

SUBGOAL 2: Allied professionals provide services to sexual violence victims with quality services.

Progress: List of allied professionals currently being compiled.

Objective 2: Identify standards of services for allied professionals.

Progress: Following the compilation of the above list, the board will work on identifying these standards.

SUBGOAL 3: All residents of Virginia have equal access to culturally appropriate services.

Progress: VSDVAA and other community groups have several ongoing projects designed to make services for victims of sexual violence more accessible to various underserved populations. These projects include: Building Comprehensive Services, The Deaf Outreach Initiative, Doors of Hope Project, Allies for People with Disabilities Task Force, Teen Dating Violence Prevention Task Force, Social Justice Task Force, Incarcerated Women Project, Hispanic Task Force, the Break The Silence Campaign, Women of Color Caucus, Native American Advocates Against Violence, and the LGBTQ Taskforce.

Objective 3: Stakeholder advisory groups of underserved populations convene to identify obstacles and accessible services.

Progress: The groups and task forces listed above have all met during the last year to further progress on their goals and objectives.

Goal 4: Effective and comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategies are implemented across Virginia.

SUBGOAL 1: Everyone recognizes, responds to and/or refers victims of sexual violence.

Progress: See Objective 1 & 2.

Objective 1: Public awareness campaigns and public education on recognition of victimization, and responding to and referring victims are provided in 25% of Virginia communities

Progress: VDH's Statutory Rape Campaign was initiated in the summer of 2004. Billboards were erected and 250,000 pieces of media were distributed to three localities in Virginia: Richmond, Roanoke and Northern Virginia. Since the beginning of the campaign, the Statutory Rape website has seen over 15,000 hits. For Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the Alliance also created PSAs for media use and made them available on their website. All public awareness materials refer individuals to the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault hotline.

Objective 2: Training on recognizing victimization and responding to and referring victims is provided to 25% of relevant providers (e.g., mental health centers, schools, workplaces, medical and legal community)

Progress: Prevention education funded through VDH is currently being provided through 18 sexual assault services to local schools and communities. Additionally other centers work within their communities to promote sexual violence awareness. Referrals are provided through the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline and contact with member agencies. List of relevant providers is currently being compiled.

Objective 3: Age appropriate curriculum (recognize, respond and refer) is implemented

in 25% of schools (kindergarten through undergraduate school) across Virginia.

Progress: The Virginia Department of Social Services contracts with Theatre IV to deliver performances of the play *Hugs and Kisses*. During 2003 and 2004, there were 264 performances at 182 Virginia schools, reaching a total of 67,553 children.

SUBGOAL 2: Everyone has access to information about recognizing and responding to perpetrator behavior.

Progress: See Objectives 4 & 5.

Objective 4: Provide a Statewide Hotline to provide options for callers who suspect someone of being a perpetrator or for callers who are perpetrators.

Progress: VDH has been working with Stop It Now! to plan and implement a statewide helpline. Work has included Virginia-specific protocols and referral directory. The Stop It Now! Steering Committee recently voted to contract with Stop It Now! to provide these services to Virginia citizens.

Objective 5: Develop and implement a public awareness campaign to inform the public about this service of the Stop It Now! Statewide hotline

Progress: Stop It Now! Helpline strategies will be developed by the Stop It Now! Steering Committee for a marketing campaign to begin Summer 2005.

SUBGOAL 3: Allied professionals and other disciplines recognize and respond to behaviors and attitudes that contribute to sexual violence

Progress: See Objective 9.

Objective 6: Identify and develop a training curriculum to recognize and respond to behaviors that contribute to sexual violence

Progress: After a list of allied professionals is developed, the Alliance's Training Institute will contribute to the development of this curriculum. Additionally, a 4-person multi-agency team from Virginia was accepted into a special 6-month PREVENT Institute. This team is developing a project that will support local sexual & domestic violence agencies to partner with youth-serving organizations in their communities. The goal of these partnerships will be to: 1) Train youth leaders to incorporate relationship/sexual violence prevention content into their existing activities, 2) Work with youth leaders to model healthy relationships, and 3) Teach youth leaders to recognize, respond, and refer to any warning signs of perpetration/victimization. The Male Outreach program at VDH has also developed a curriculum for service providers on sexual coercion and is currently organizing these workshops across the state.

SUBGOAL 4: Individuals will not engage in or support sexual violence

Progress: See Objective 11.

Objective 7: Materials for a prevention media campaign will be developed and the campaign will begin.

Progress: VDH is currently working on developing *Men of Strength* materials for allied professionals including a brochure on working with men and boys in sexual violence

prevention and a display to be used at conferences and workshops. Additionally, the Decide to End Sexual Violence materials published by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center will be utilized.

Objective 8: Prevention strategies for kindergarten through undergraduate school will be researched and identified.

Progress: A representative from the Department of Education has been invited to sit on advisory board and assist in the development of these strategies. Additionally, VDH has begun to offer and fund Child Assault Prevention trainings for facilitators across the state.

Objective 9: Prevention strategies for the workplace will be researched and identified.

Progress: The Board has not addressed this. VSDVAA will initiate this research in the coming year.

SUBGOAL 5: Systems and organizations will not support sexual violence.

Progress: See Objective 15.

Objective 10: Identify those systems and organizations and the structures that support sexual violence within them.

Progress: The Advisory Board chose colleges as the system to work in. The Campus Sexual Assault Task Force will be working on this in more detail.

SUBGOAL 6: Sex offender treatment is effective and available.

Progress: See Objective 17.

Objective 11: A panel of treatment providers and victims' advocates audit the current state of sex offender treatment and identify best practices in Virginia.

Progress: This will be coordinated with the sex offender treatment providers that are part of the Stop It Now! Steering Committee this coming year.

Goal 5: Effective and comprehensive sexual violence prevention strategies are implemented across Virginia

SUBGOAL 1: Public policies support sexual violence prevention.

Progress: In the summer of 2004, DCJS began developing an agency plan (tentative publish date: spring, 2005). As part of that process, the Victims Services Section conducted a focus group of victim advocates and criminal justice professionals to determine the pressing needs of sexual assault victims around the state. The participants drew attention to several public policy issues that DCJS can help address (e.g. problems surrounding the authorization, collection, and payment of PERK exams). Although this group was mainly concerned with the response to sexual assaults, they did offer one secondary prevention recommendation: increased funding for the treatment of sex offenders, especially juveniles, statewide.

SUBGOAL 2: There is uniformity and accountability in sentencing for sex offenders.

Objective 1: The Virginia Crime Commission studies the criminal code and sentencing guidelines to identify gaps and inconsistencies.

Progress: During the 2005 General Assembly session, two high priority bills were passed. The first removed the marital exemption for sodomy and object penetration from the Virginia code, and the second makes sexual battery of someone who is mentally incapacitated a felony.

SUBGOAL 3: Public policies promote sexual violence prevention strategies and support the needs and rights of sexual violence victims.

Progress: VSDVAA has begun preliminary discussions with a key staff member of the Virginia Department of Education. She was made aware of problematic (e.g., victim-blaming) language in the FLE Guidelines. She has agreed to look into the origins of this language and help determine the next course of action.

Objective 2: Legislative Commission on Sexual Violence Reduction convened.

Progress: As one of the recommendations of the legislative sexual assault study, the Alliance, DCJS and VDH will work toward.